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Little Songs  
*from*  
Life's Book





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By  
Minnie Hazelle Pierce Preston

MINNIE HAZELLE PIERCE PRESTON

Privately Printed  
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*Verses by*  
Minnie Hazelle Pierce Preston



*To my beloved chum brother, who was ever the  
companion and champion of my youthful days,  
this book is lovingly dedicated.*



## PREFACE AND INDEX

THESE poems are reminiscent of the life of a family in the early days in Missouri. The stories and episodes are true.

The poems are simply reflections of nature in that wonderful prairie region, where dreams and fancies seemed to link this world to the invisible. Especially when a mirage loomed up on the horizon, it was easy to fancy the New Jerusalem not far distant. The very atmosphere seemed to radiate joy. And as "'tis the heart's own cheer that makes it glad," we were on the whole a most happy crew. What cared we for a few surface troubles? Corn bread, pork, wild onions, and sorghum were so permeated with hopes that they seemed and *were* only bridges to the Castles we were planning for the future.

I. A FAMILY OF BOYS is a rollicking poem. Though the noise often jarred, the joys filled the jars, and left the family their debtor.

II. A SONG OF MIDDLE LIFE. Those souls who have trembled along through youth and reach middle life and maturity at the same time will understand these verses. They give us a wonderful vision of the realities and sacredness of life.

III. OUR ROAD TO SCHOOL was the expression of a young soul perfectly attuned to the soft, dreamy sweetness of spring; not as yet fully awake, but divinely conscious of the fact that farther on the sunshine would be more brilliant and the storms more severe.

IV. APRIL has come with her shy but brave gladsomeness, and anyone who has stood alone with Nature in her waking hours as her breath rises in wreaths of vapor from every valley and stream will hear these sweet, wonderful little noises.

V. THE CYCLONE is an account of the way in which a neighbor's house was destroyed and their son, Charlie, killed. Our own early home met with like disaster a few years later. The destruction was so great that not a vestige was left of tree or shrub. The chickens were all killed and many stripped of their feathers. A plank was found into which a straw had been driven like a nail. The floor where the mother sat holding her baby dropped into the cellar, where they found themselves more frightened than hurt. Their little four-year-old boy was carried from the porch to a near-by pasture; all his clothes had mysteriously disappeared and he was altogether unhurt. The house of a near neighbor, Mr. Murray, was even more completely destroyed. A horse and buggy at the gate vanished and no trace of them was ever found. I suppose the family took refuge in the cellar, a trick we had learned a few years before leaving the farm.

One young chap, after looking at a picture of the remains of the house in which he was born, said with an attempt at deep chagrin: "Well, there is no hope now of my ever becoming famous, since I haven't even a birthplace."

VI. SWINGING. One can't help feeling the joys of swinging in this young girl's rhapsody.

VII. RAINDROPS, though so sweet and soothing to others, made her almost miss her examination; for that poem was first written on the back of those papers. They had sung themselves over and over

in the youthful brain until they *had to be written*, for bits of poetry were bits of joy that could not be suppressed in the heart of this girl in her teens.

VIII. A COUNTRY FROLIC. A reminiscence. We see in this, one of the many ways the youngsters had of making fun for themselves. It was better on the whole than moving pictures. They had lots of laughter, and all of their own invention.

The blessed comradeship and helping hands of neighbors are nowhere so dear as on the frontier.

IX. MORNING. The joys of day's awakening.

X. As old Father Time has a way of pushing aside the sweet dreams and glamour which youth throws over life, he has put the young maiden on horse back and sent her galloping over the prairies hunting a school to teach; for other families have moved into the neighborhood bringing children, also a superfluity of teachers, and so we have the amusing and somewhat overdrawn picture of her trials in HUNTING A SCHOOL.

XI. An exuberant SONG OF SPRING.

XII. A MOTHER'S REFLECTIONS.

XIII. A PLEA — to mothers — to give expression of their love to their children is a beautiful and timely lesson to proclaim to weary, thoughtless mothers.

XIV. DEDICATION.

XV. MORNING GLORIES.

XVI. A DAUGHTER'S APOSTROPHE TO A TRAIN ran out from the point of a pencil borrowed from a stranger at Whiting, Indiana, where the train slowed down, finally stopped, ran back, and then waited

for a long time, leaving the impatient traveler somewhat worn and helpless, but inspired to give vent to her feelings at the delay.

XVII. HARVEST GOLD—A ROMANCE—materialized into one of her own; and she, leaving the school-house, was afterwards most happy in rearing a family of her own wonderful, wonderful boys, and of dedicating them to the Saviour in baptism.

XVIII. Now follows the touching poem, THE SILENT BATTLE, in which the bleeding heart lays two of the dear sons on her country's altar.

XIX. A TRIBUTE TO MOTHER is most touching in showing the appreciation a child had of the labors of her mother, and makes her hope to hear the Saviour say, *well done*. But of all those soulful verses, the last contains the quintessence of joy.

XX. TO RHEUA. Her latest poem was inspired by the birth of a granddaughter in the home of her chum brother.

MOTHER.

# VERSES



## I. A FAMILY OF BOYS

OH! the wonderful, wonderful, wonderful *noise*  
Of a family of four, six, eight or ten boys.  
They run and they dance, they shout and they sing,  
Till the sturdy old beams of the kitchen walls ring.

They come from the barn with a whoop and a hop,  
Splash, dash through the mud, the snow or the  
slop,  
Make only one scratch at the scraper's broad blade,  
Then on to the pantry continue their raid.

"We're starved half to death, we're famished, we're  
dead,  
For as much as you've got, of butter and bread!"  
'Tis the call for provisions. I must empty the shelves,  
For before soldiers starve, they will wait on them-  
selves.

And oh, if they should! I shudder to think  
Of the mess and the muss left in cupboard and sink.  
What wonder they grow like the tall weeds in May,  
These dear laughing boys, full of mischief and play.

And suppose I am tired and night has come on:  
In rush these same boys from a romp on the lawn,—  
"You're sick or you're tired, we know by your looks,  
So bring out your magazines, papers and books.

"Surrender your apron, trot out the dish pan;  
We'll clean up the table as fast as we can  
If you'll take the *Companion* and read us a tale;  
For I saw neighbor Murray a-bringing the mail."  
Oh! the wonderful, wonderful, wonderful *joys*  
Of a family of four, six, eight or ten boys.

## II. A SONG OF MIDDLE LIFE

WE are standing at last on the hill top of life,  
O Heart, shout out your glad song;  
For we stand in our pride  
And our outlook is wide,  
We are capable, competent, strong.

We can dare, we can do; as never before  
We can summon our forces at will.  
In the strength of our years  
We have conquered our fears,  
And we dwell on the top of the hill.

Oh, this hill-top is pleasant and sunny and high;  
But buoyant and strong though we be,  
A feeling of sadness  
Steals in on our gladness,  
We have caught a glimpse of the sea.

We have sighted the path that leads down to its shore,  
And whether we're willing or no,  
With smile or with frown  
We must go slowly down,  
Where the waters are waiting below.

Oh, the sea of old age is pulseless and cold  
Where thousands drift aimlessly on,  
And we know without doubt,  
That we, too, shall sail out  
Away from our glory and song.

But, though we may cling to the morning of life  
Or long in its noontide to stay,  
We will not bewail,  
For we know that we sail  
To the "land that is fairer than day."

Where eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,  
Or the tongue of man dared to declare  
    The joy of the soul  
    When it enters this goal,  
For God and our loved ones are there.

So, who would turn back, though the sailing be hard,  
For, out past the breakers and foam,  
    We know we shall see,  
    As clear as can be,  
The bright, shining windows of Home.

### III. OUR ROAD TO SCHOOL

HOW bright and red the berries bled,  
'Neath heaps of green leaves cool;  
How bright and blue the violets grew  
Along our road to school!

How soft and bright the yellow light  
Shone down in golden rays;  
How sweet the breeze, how green the trees,  
How dear those childish days!

In troops we came adown the lane,  
A book-armed little host;  
Filled to the brim with fun and vim,  
Our life was all a boast.

We worked and sighed and mourned and cried,  
O'er long division's rule;  
But sorrows flew, as children's do,  
When once released from school.

And now we're grown, our childhood flown;  
But mem'ry, ever young,  
In traveling back Time's well-worn track,  
Finds joys where tear drops sprung.

For, as we climb the hill of time,  
We're always sure to find  
No paths so sweet to wandering feet  
As those we leave behind.

#### IV. APRIL

**B**RIGHT April has come, its sunshine is here,  
With sweet Easter blossoms and glad Easter  
cheer.

The brown birds are trilling their songs sweet and  
clear.

Beneath the damp hedge where the red mosses glow,  
Where sunbeams have stolen the last bit of snow,  
The little green leaves are beginning to grow.

In the soft morning hour, just after the day  
Has smiled on the earth in her own winsome way,  
And driven the mists from the hill-tops away,

From earth and from sky, from valley and hill,  
A thousand sweet sounds the dreamy air fill,  
That echo and murmur, yet never grow still.

We join in that chorus these voices of ours,  
And welcome thee back with thy sunshine and  
showers,  
Thy budding and blooming and sweet Easter  
flowers.

## V. THE CYCLONE

'TWAS in bright, early springtime when sunshine  
and hope  
Ran riot on hillside and plain,  
The budding trees sang to the soft peeping grass,  
For the whole world was happy, I ween.

The day had been hot; the sun's sultry rays  
Poured down with a fiery beat.  
Not a breeze was astir on the smothering hills  
To break the long quivers of heat.

. . . . .

Dark shadows had folded the world in their arms,  
And slumbers had dropped from the sky;  
And massive and dark were the gathering clouds,  
That piled their huge mountains on high.

With a rush and a roar the wild cyclone came,  
Like a demon let loose in its might;  
It plucked up the trees and plowed down the hills  
And filled with wild horror the night.

It breathed on our home, our dear, cosy home,  
A moment, and then all was over,  
And Charlie, our Charlie, the pride of our life,  
Was pinned 'neath the ceiling and floor.

One little brown hand, to ward off the blow,  
Was raised over his fair curly head;  
The brown eyes were closed, the rosy lips pale,  
And we knew that our Charlie was dead.

O God, give us strength that we may believe,  
Thou doest these things for our good.  
'Tis hard for Thy weak, erring children below  
To trust and believe as they should.

## VI. SWINGING

UNDERNEATH the maples tall,  
Where the robin redbreasts call,  
And the cooling shadows fall,  
See us swing,  
Hear us sing,  
Birds we are upon the wing.

Like a flash we cleave the air!  
See the world so green and fair,  
Reaching, stretching everywhere,  
While below  
Daisies grow,  
Little rifts of gold and snow.

Spiders swing along their webs,  
Babies swing in cradled beds,  
Poppies swing their scarlet heads,  
While little girls  
With flying curls  
Are swinging where the breeze unfurls.

## VII. RAINDROPS

**L**ISTEN to the hallowed calling  
Of the raindrops softly falling,  
Softly sighing,  
Softly crying,  
As they fall in tend'rest tune.  
Stars they've banished,  
Blue sky vanished,  
Prisoner held the silvery moon.

When the world is wrapped in slumber  
And the clouds the stars outnumber,  
Oft their coming,  
With their humming,  
Seems a snatch from seraph song.  
Sweet their singing,  
Echoes ringing,  
Down the sky and earth along.

Now with dawn the clouds are lifting,  
Golden sunshine downward sifting,  
Rainbows bending,  
Colors blending,  
Dimly light the arch above.  
Blue sky peeping,  
Zephyrs creeping,  
Earth is filled with light and love.

## VIII. A COUNTRY FROLIC

### A REMINISCENCE

A WAGON load of young folks  
To spend the evening long  
Had gone to Marshal Murray's,  
And loud were laugh and song.  
When Mr. Bruce was singing,  
"Do, sol, do, sol, me, do,"  
From out the star-lit darkness  
We heard some one halloo.  
The cordial Mr. Murray  
Called out a time or more  
And on receiving no response  
Went back and closed the door.  
Then out rushed Will, the daring,  
And shouted, "Hello, Cap!"  
The frightened girls declaring  
They heard a pistol snap.  
The porch was full by this time,  
Yet the fellow never stirred,  
But stood fast holding his valise,  
And answered not a word.  
Poor Will was pale by this time:  
    "He will not say a word —  
Hello there, Cap, hello there! . . .  
He surely *must* have heard."  
At last Bruce ventured to the front,  
While Will with reckless dash  
Let fly a stone; one hit his foot,  
We heard his satchel smash.  
But hark! what a very funny noise!  
When the stones on the poor man beat,  
Off came his boots and, what in the world —  
Is that *straw* coming out at his feet?  
These can't our frightened heroes be,

Talk about courage — pshaw!  
Their courage rose with cyclone speed  
When they found 'twas a man of straw.  
We never saw two braver men.  
They “knew all the time 'twas a sell”;  
But we wisely nod and say to ourselves,  
“That does very well to *tell*.”

This unresponsive stranger  
Had stopped the night before,  
Beside the gate of Howard Pierce,  
And hallooed him to the door.  
“Good evening, sir, good evening;  
What’s wanted there, I say?  
If he’s too drunk to answer  
Just let the fellow stay.  
But no, I’d better go and see,  
Because he might be sick,  
Bring me my boots, somebody,  
And get the poker quick.  
And Frank, you’d better come along,  
For he might try to fight.  
Don’t stay behind, you’re young and strong,  
My nerves are weak to-night.”  
And so with care they venture near,  
Both looking very bold,  
When Frank’s sharp eyes discerned the trick —  
O Deacon Pierce, you’re sold!

## IX. MORNING

**B**LUSHING up the sky  
With a rosy hue,  
Comes the golden morning,  
Comes the day anew.

Cloudy castles builded  
On a wall of blue,  
Strong with mighty towers  
Gilded all anew.

On the tender grasses,  
Trembling drops of dew,  
Gold and rose and purple,  
Flash their lights anew.

Feathered woodland tenants,  
Red and brown and blue,  
Sing till all the woodlands  
Throb with life anew.

All the creation waking,  
Rest and slumber through,  
With a hum of gladness  
Fills the world anew.

And our Heavenly Father,  
Ever kind and true,  
In his tender mercy  
Sends his love anew.

X. HUNTING A SCHOOL  
OR, A COUNTRY TEACHER'S VACATION

**H**ITHER, thither, yonder, there,  
Teachers rushing everywhere;  
Horses white and horses brown  
Scour the country up and down,  
Starting at the early dawn,  
Rushing till the sun is gone.  
Teachers people every hill,  
Teachers all the valleys fill.  
Breezes sound with hoofs' loud ring,  
Sleepers from their couches spring;  
Father, mother, sister, brother,  
Hear them say to one another,  
"What's that fearful, awful blast?"  
"Teachers, teachers, rushing past."  
All about us high and low,  
Ask one question as they go.  
Hark, the frogs in shady pool:  
"Got, oh got, oh got, a school?"  
Birdies pipe it from the trees,  
Voices shout it in the breeze,  
Brooklets mock us as they run:  
"You can't, you can't, you can't get one."  
Until poor Teacher longs to cry:  
"I want to die, I want to die."

Now we see home's saving light,  
On again with doubled might,  
Reach at last the welcome door,  
Hear a dozen voices pour,  
Anxious all to know our fate:  
"Got a school,— you're back so late?"  
Though we're faint, and nearly dead,  
Though our bosom's full of lead,

Though we'd rather die than tell,  
We must ring our funeral knell.  
So we answer quick and low:  
"Have I got one? Have I? No!  
Directors all were on the roam —  
Horrid men, they're never home.  
Smith and Green were cutting flax,  
Jones had gone to pay his tax.  
The Bowman board said with a snurl,  
'We wouldn't fool with any girl.'  
They want a *man* that's big and stout  
To beat and bang their boys about."

Of every task beneath the sun,  
School hunting is the hardest one.

## XI. A SONG OF SPRING

**I** FEAR I'll be thought exceeding bold  
For daring to write on a subject so old;  
For a prophet has said, and we know it is true,  
That under the sun there is *nothing* that's new,  
It's been sung of by young, it's been sung of by old,  
Yet half of its beauty has never been told.  
It's so full of red buds and tender green things,  
Of black cawing crows and soft welling springs,  
Of sweet little breezes, just straight from the sun,  
That roll in the grasses and whispering run  
Away o'er the hills in their wild happy glee,  
'Neath skies that are blue as spring skies can be.  
The butterflies, too, like flowerlets on wing,  
Too fair to be hidden by brookside or spring,  
Are sailing by softly, where all can behold  
How gorgeous their raiment of scarlet and gold.  
Now come to the orchard,— oh, can it be true  
That *this* is the place where the red apples grew?  
'Tis fairyland now, not a tree is in sight,  
Just masses of blossoms of pink and of white.  
The air is astir with the run-away notes  
Which the brown and red robins have lost from their  
throats.

Look out in the meadow: those little flower-girls,  
In blue and pink aprons and wind-tangled curls,  
With sunbonnets hanging and brown dimpled hands,  
The fairest of blossoms in spring's budding band.  
And like the wee buds that peep from the ground  
Wee girlyies grow fair 'mid the fairness around;  
So they gather the roses of delicate red  
Till softly the tints o'er their little cheeks spread,  
And their bright eyes look up at the blue of the  
sky,  
While the jolly old sun twinkles back in reply.

With cowslips of yellow they garland their hair,  
And the golden reflection is permanent there:  
Of all the sweet things in this bright world of ours,  
There is nothing more fair than these sweet human  
    flowers;  
May the cyclones of sorrow ne'er darken their lives,  
Or the sunshine be chased from their trusting blue  
    eyes,  
May they grow in sweet grace through life's spring's  
    happy-days  
Till they reach perfect summer, sweet womanhood's  
    ways.

## XII. A MOTHER'S REFLECTIONS

**I**S there anything on earth  
Half so fair  
As these little ones entrusted  
To our care?

Trusted to us soul and body  
By the Lord,  
Who has taught us how to guide them  
In His word.

Do we realize the greatness  
Of our task?  
And before our Father's foot-stool  
Guidance ask?

For Life's road is very rugged  
For their feet,  
And the Devil's shy temptations  
Very sweet.

Heavenly Father, watch Thou o'er them  
From above,  
Make their little hearts fit temples  
For Thy love.

In the hollow of Thy hand,  
Hold them, pray;  
While they're growing into manhood  
Lead the way.

### XIII. A PLEA

MOTHERS, if you love your children,  
*Show them that you do.*

Put a loving arm around them,  
Draw them up to you.

Do not say to self, "I love them,"  
Then with face hard set and stern,  
Veto some much longed for pleasure,  
While mad tears their eyelids burn.

Little pleasures coldly vetoed  
Form heart-chasms, deep and dark,  
All their secrets they'll keep from you,  
Hide them in their lonely hearts.

Oh, they long to go to mother,  
But she ne'er invites them there;  
So they keep with many a heartache  
Secrets that she ought to share.

Mothers, if you love your children,  
*Let them know you do.*  
Put a mother's arm around them,  
Draw them up to you.

#### XIV. DEDICATION

WE gave thee, my son, to the Lord,  
In thy earliest babyhood days,  
And prayed, as the pure water fell,  
That He keep thee in all of thy ways.

We gave Him thy pure baby heart,  
To fill with thoughts holy and fair,  
And prayed that the vile and the low  
Might find no abiding place there.

We asked Him to give to these hands,  
So delicate, dimpled, and white,  
The strength to do battle with sin,  
And conquerors be in the fight.

Remember, my son, when the paths  
Of the wicked seem fair to thy sight,  
That we gave these dear feet to the Lord,  
Who has promised to guide them aright.

And so with glad songs in our heart,  
To the King on His Heavenly throne,  
Who from time immemorial claimed  
All dear little ones as His own,

We set on thy fair baby brow  
The seal of baptism so sweet,  
And knew that we safely might leave  
Our boy at the wise Master's feet.

Let the acts of thy life, my wee son,  
With His will be in perfect accord;  
For thou dost not belong to thyself;  
Thou wast given away to the Lord.

## XV. MORNING GLORIES

THE dainty morning glory buds,  
Scarce yet their folds unfurling,  
Are steeping up their leafy heights  
With early dew-drops pearling.

Of laughing blue, their texture bright,  
Like bits of sky their dresses,  
They'll soon untwist their fairy cups  
To greet the sun's caresses.

Like holy censer's sacred bowl,  
In leafy chapel swinging,  
To God ascends the homage sweet  
That you each morn are bringing.

May we, O fairest morning flower,  
Of you a lesson learn,  
And at our heart's most sacred shrine  
Our prayers like incense burn.

## XVI. A DAUGHTER'S APOSTROPHE TO A TRAIN

GOING back home to see mother,  
O train, what makes you so slow?  
Why do you stop, and jerk, and run back —  
Why don't you *hurry* and go?

Don't you know that in one of your coaches  
Sits a *girl* whose hair is quite gray?  
She's no longer a wife or a mother,  
For she's turned back her life's clock today.

The last thirty years have slipped from her,  
With their fillings of joy and of pain,  
And instead of a worldly-wise woman  
She is mother's dear girlie again.

The gray bands have gone from her forehead,  
The gray coil from the top of her head,  
And the black curly locks of her childhood  
Are tied with their ribbons of red.

Each day is a time of new pleasures,  
A world where enchanted winds blow,  
A wide sunny stretch of green prairies  
Where the larkspur and wild roses grow.

And oh! if you knew how she'd waited  
Long years for this moment to come,  
In pity you'd start, your red heart aglow,  
And then you would run, *how you'd run!*

So, train, hurry up with your speeding,  
And whistle and ring as you go,  
You are running away from the land of old age  
To the world where sweet mem'ry flowers grow.

## XVII. HARVEST GOLD

### A ROMANCE

I WILL sing a golden song,  
I will sing a glad refrain,  
Sing of golden summer-time,  
Sing of fields of golden grain.

Sing of seas of waving gold  
Stretching to the edge of all,  
Melting with the golden clouds  
Piled against the azure wall.

Sing of how the morning breaks  
On a farmhouse dark and brown;  
How the golden sun comes up,  
Dropping golden moments down.

Sing of Will, the harvester,  
Strong and manly, brown and bold,  
Resting, fanning, 'neath the hedge,  
With his hat of braided gold.

Sing of Elsie, fair and sweet,  
Crowned with curls of golden light,  
In a simple gown of blue,  
Dainty checkered blue and white.

Sing of Elsie, coming now,  
Through the golden-headed wheat,  
With the "harvest lunch" for Will,  
Bread and golden butter sweet.

Apples, too, of rarest gold,  
From the Early Harvest tree,  
And a pone of golden maze,—  
Could a nicer luncheon be?

Sing of Will, forgetful quite  
Of the dainties at his feet,  
Only knowing Elsie's near,  
Laughing Elsie, fair and sweet.

Is the golden sun so bright  
That sweet Elsie's eyes drop down?  
Must Will hold her hand in his,  
So the sun can't turn it brown?

Sing of Will and Elsie, too,  
In the golden morn of life,  
Was it wind, or was it Will  
Whispering — "Elsie — sweetheart,  
wife?"

Sing how e'er the harvest moon  
Chased the golden sun from sight;  
Elsie shyer, fairer still,  
Wore a ring of golden light.

Sing a golden wish at last,  
Launch them on life's golden tide,  
Tho' the clouds must sometimes come,  
May they see the golden side.

## XVIII. THE SILENT BATTLE

WITH tear dimmed eyes and an aching heart,  
I entered the war one day.  
“Over the top” I went alone,  
There was none to hear my stifled moan  
As I silently joined the fray.

No call of bugle, no blare of drum,  
No bayonet gleaming bright —  
In our quiet home the deed was done  
As I sewed a star for my sailor son  
On my Service Flag’s field of white.

I fought the fight as best I could,  
For my country had need of men;  
And I sought to trust when all was o’er  
That he would come back to our home once more:  
And I learned to smile again.

But *today* my mother-tears fall fast,  
Tho at heart I am staunch and true  
As I sew on my flag for my youngest son,  
Who has gone to serve till the war is won,  
A second star of blue.

And I’m left in a house so strange and still  
That it seems like a silent tomb,  
And every day when the shadows fall  
I steal upstairs through the quiet hall  
And visit each empty room.

It is almost more than the heart can bear —  
This silent hour of pain.  
As I kneel at the bed, unwrinkled now,  
I rebaptize each boyish brow  
With tears, like a bitter rain.

I have given my all. I cannot do more.

I have emptied our home of its joys.  
And *doubly* I stand in this terrible fight,  
For the things that are true and the things that are  
right,  
In the hearts of my Sailor Boys.

## XIX. A TRIBUTE TO MOTHER, AT THE SUNSET OF LIFE

**B**ELOVED, do you realize  
The privilege that's thine?—  
To dwell in life's most holy place,  
To lay upon its shrine  
Thy offering of years well spent,  
Of song through storm and rain,  
Of heavy burdens gladly borne,  
And nights of silent pain.  
  
Of comforting some saddened home  
Where death had claimed its toll,  
Or with some mother, welcoming  
A little newborn soul.  
Or gathering children to your home  
On Sunday afternoons  
To teach to them the Word of God  
And sweet, old gospel tunes.  
  
Of days and weeks and months and years  
Of giving of your best,  
Of watching o'er some sufferer's bed  
And bringing ease and rest,  
Of being sweet and brave and true  
When sorrow's heavy rain  
Beat down to earth some cherished hope,  
You've prayed and smiled again.  
  
But more than this, a thousand times,  
If such a thing could be,  
Ten little vessels you have launched  
Upon life's stormy sea;  
And to each sturdy captain small  
A chart and compass given,  
That each might miss the hidden rocks  
And make the port of Heaven.

For this we know, dear faithful one,  
Would break your loving heart,  
To have one sailor lad mislay  
His compass or his chart.  
And having naught by which to steer,  
When doubts and darkness come,  
Should drift away among the shoals  
And miss the routing Home.

So this, our wish and hope shall be,  
And this, our earnest prayer:  
That some bright day when you have reached  
The land of "Over There,"  
Where God shall wipe all tears away,  
And death has lost its sting,—  
With happiness complete you'll see  
Your ships come sailing in.

## XX. TO RHEUA

### ON HER FIRST BIRTHDAY

TWELVE happy months have passed away  
And left you one year old today.

One little light  
Is burning bright  
Upon the birthday cake of white.

One little taper, yet how far  
Can shine this tiny natal star.  
Its golden rays  
Fill all our days,  
And glorify life's darkest ways.

We dare not think what life would mean  
Should this wee candle cease to gleam;  
But this our prayer  
That God may spare  
Till many candles twinkle there.

How sweet you sit in baby grace,  
The light of Heaven on your face.  
A laugh, a coo,  
A smile or two,  
A pair of eyes of Heaven's blue.

And as the summers come and go,  
And the roses bud and blow,  
They each one hold  
A heart of gold;  
So may your little life unfold.

So may you grow in truth and grace,  
Your little heart God's dwelling place,  
And sing His praise  
Through all your days  
And live and work for Him always.



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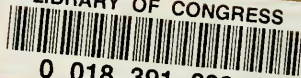








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